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Dr. Keith Dobracki, Biological Dentist, on

Heart-Healthy Living

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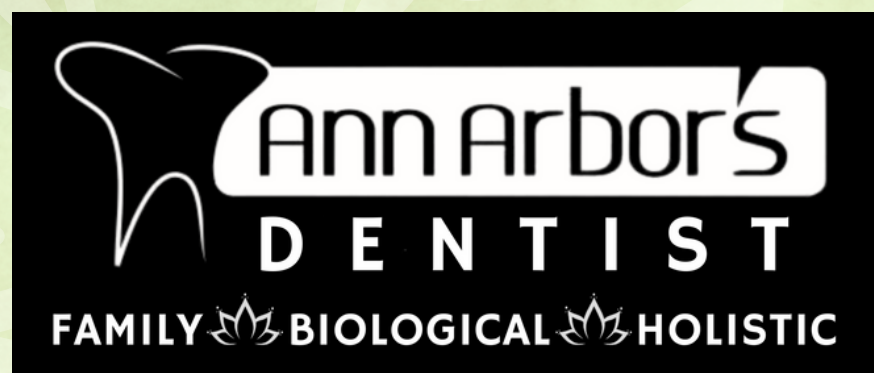
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The Love Frequency

Author and motivational speaker Felice Leonardo Buscaglia, also known as “Dr. Love”, said, “Love is life. And if you miss love, you miss life.” I truly believe this and hope you’ll join us on a mission to live with love! The power of choosing to approach each day from a place of love is something I’ve personally experienced as transformative.

There is a wonderful feeling when opting for love and then experiencing its high vibration replace fear-based, fight-or-flight thinking with a more spiritual level of consciousness.

February always reminds us to celebrate love in its many forms as Valentine’s Day approaches. You’ll find this issue filled with many marvelous ways to physically, emotionally and effectively nourish your heart and overall well-being.

Our feature story explores the connection between the mouth and cardiovascular health. We are so thrilled to have Ann Arbor’s only biological dentist, Dr. Keith Dobracki, and his lovely family grace our front cover this month! Be sure to check out his article, “Let Your Heart Smile” for best practices and innovative treatments. In the sidebar “Fun Mouth Facts,” he shares intriguing information about oral health for a beautiful smile, as well.

This magical expression can spark the gift of love with anyone along your path and life’s inevitable twists and turns present opportunities to embrace everyone with grace as we choose to magnify the good in all things through love. I know that when I respond with my heart using the frequency of love and not just my analytical mind, I’ve

seen relationships heal in ways I never thought possible. Love is the glue the holds the universe together! Plus, by focusing on our heart center, we also open up space within so the solutions to challenges can reveal themselves. If the desired outcome doesn’t appear, at least we have an opportunity to more clearly discover what we don’t want.

We can either let life happen to us or take responsibility for every aspect and outcome of our experience, being accountable for what and who we let into our consciousness, starting with spirit. Whichever route we take, we will receive needed lessons.

Wherever you land, we hope you remember to be grateful that a new dawn breaks every morning, giving us all the opportunity to start anew and find fresh ways to live and love. Collectively, we can raise the vibration of the planet to new heights if we open our hearts and seek to emulate love and compassion each and every day. In doing so, we will also expand our capacity to feel more love and deepen our connection to all of humanity. May we all opt for more love!

All our love,

Trina & John



We’re thankful to you—our readers—and your belief in and support of this publication. We love you! Please share your thoughts, news, calendar listings, local story ideas and feedback with us via email at Publisher@HealthyLivingMichigan.com. It is always a delight to hear from readers, and we appreciate knowing that our content has touched you in a meaningful way.

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

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Crazy Wisdom Bookstore Returns to its Roots

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore has reopened at its original location, 114 South Main Street, in downtown Ann Arbor. Owners Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter made the business a center of mindfulness, spirituality and conscious living since opening in 1982 and closing in February 2022.

The store will be a simpler operation with shorter hours and smaller staff, including general manager Chandra Mitchel. This shift is accompanied by a more condensed inventory of books and the closure of the tearoom by converting the space to hosting events and gatherings. Mitchel started as a part-time cashier who sold her jewelry in the store.

The bookstore is focusing on the core subjects that longtime customers have counted on, such as spirituality and wisdom traditions, psychology, integrative health, body-mind therapies and sustainability.

For more information, call 734-665-2757, email Info@CrazyWisdom.net or visit linktr.ee/crazywisdom.



A Special Night for Special People

The 10th annual Night to Shine for people with special needs is an unforgettable prom night experience centered on God's love for people ages 14

and older. Volunteers are needed from 5 to 11:30 p.m., February 9, at 242 Community Church.

The unforgettable Night to Shine prom experience is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and is happening simultaneously in locations across the country. Participants can expect a prom experience unlike any other, designed to make each guest feel like the kings and queens that they are.

The guests will be greeted with a red carpet, cheering volunteers and a buddy that will serve as their host for the evening. The guests will dance, be served at a banquet, and each participant will receive a crown or tiara.



Admission is free. Location: 648 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor. Register at 242community.com/our-events/night-to-shine. For more information, visit TimTebowFoundation.org/night-to-shine.

Plant Some Trees

The Washtenaw County Conservation District (WCCD) Spring Tree and Shrub Sale pre-ordering will close on March 18. Orders will be available to pick up from 1 to 6 p.m., April 26, and 9 to 11 a.m., April 27, at the Farm Council Grounds. Remaining trees and shrubs can be purchased in person starting at 10 a.m., April 27.

The WCCD Spring Tree and Shrub sale offers accessibly priced woody plant bare-root seedlings for all conservation needs. There are various conifers for windbreaks, privacy screens and timber. Numerous native species support conservation efforts, including Paw-Paw, Serviceberry, Winterberry, Chinkapin Oak, Sugar Maple, Spicebush, American Chestnut, Buckeye and more. A variety of fruit is available: apple, peach, pear, nectarine, raspberry and wild blueberry. Planting aids are offered to support plant survival and include tree shelters, weed mats, pest repellants and others.

Location: 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd., Ann Arbor. Place orders online at washtenawcd.org/trees.



Sound Healing Certification

Rob Meyer-Kukan, owner of 7 Notes Natural Health, is providing two-and-four-day sound and vibrational double certifications on March 16 through 19. He says, "Our intention for this amazing interactive training is to not only share the theory, science and practices of sound healing, but to give you hands-on experience." In-person instruction includes Level 1: Practitioner of Sound Healing Certification; and Level 2: Practitioner of Vibrational Therapy Certification.

"During the certification, we will provide you with practice instruments. We will share resources from which you may choose to purchase crystal singing bowls, Himalayan bowls, gongs and other instruments," explains Meyer-Kukan. "Once enrolled, you will be sent a link to our Introduction to Sound Healing course, which will allow you to begin the study of the science and theory in the practice. You will be required to complete this course prior to the in-person training event. It can be done at your own pace and will set you up for success for the in-person certification."

Payment plans are available. Location: 3830 Packard Rd., Ste. 120, Ann Arbor. For pricing and more information, call 248-962-5475, email Contact@7NotesNaturalHealth.com or visit MeditateYou.Me/ann-arbor-sound-certification and 7NotesNaturalHealth.com.



Rob Meyer-Kukan

Start Off the Year With a Discount

Imagine Fitness & Yoga has a special offer for new clients of 10 classes for \$135 (valid for three months), a \$195 value. Owners John and Jackie Farah say, "Get started on your fitness journey with Imagine. Join us for cycling, strength and balance, yoga, Pilates, tai chi and total body! We offer small group classes with expert instructors who will meet you at your level, with guided instruction."

Claim discount at ImagineFitnessAndYoga.com/pricing. Location: 3100 West Liberty, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-622-8119 or email Imagine@ImagineFitnessAndYoga.com.



Herbs and Community Spirit in Ypsilanti

The Bloodroot Herb Shop, founded in August by Corinne Denomme and Alex Rae Crofoot at 208 West Michigan Avenue, in Ypsilanti, stands as the realization of their dream of fostering a resilient and joyful community space centered around the power of herbs, education and holistic well-being. Customers can shop for bulk herbs and tea, herbal wares, plants and zines.

The store provides more than 45 quality bulk herbs primarily sourced from local organic farmers, an extensive zine lounge with vintage seating, pregnancy and children's herbals, small-batch herbal extracts and skin care products, house and medicinal plants, teas and more. There is also a community space for hosting workshops.



For more information, call 734-802-5408 or visit BloodrootHerbShop.com.

Yoga Teacher Training at Zion Well

Zion Well, a supportive wellness community providing education in yoga, meditation and breathwork, will conduct a 13-week, 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training course certified through the Yoga Alliance beginning February 15 and continuing from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and 8 to 9 a.m. online on Zoom and 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays at the Ann Arbor Zion Well studio.

Founders Aubrey and Art Schupbach say, "Teacher training is an unforgettable experience that offers you lifelong self-development tools that empower your mental health, now and beyond. Join Zion Well for an unforgettable journey! Throughout this course, you will develop sustainable tools for your life-long yoga and meditation practice. Whether you plan to teach or not, this course is for you!"



Location: 3384 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor. For more information or to register, visit ZionWell.com/yogateachertraining.

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~ Advertorial ~



IMPROVE IMMUNITY WITH WINTER SALE ON IMMUCORE

It is important to improve immunity during the winter months, and ImmuCore, from Wycoff Wellness Center, is on sale for 20 percent off the regular price of \$38 through February 29 in a 90-capsule form.

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Wycoff Wellness has the important supplements to keep you healthy and improve your immune system naturally. Metagenics also makes a complementary product called Immune Active which can be used to improve immune health if you are already ill. John O. Wycoff, DO, is a board-certified family physician. He is the founder and CEO of the Wycoff Wellness Center and practices functional/integrative medicine.

These products may be obtained at the Wycoff Wellness Center's office in East Lansing or online at WycoffWellness.com. See ad on back cover,

CITRUS FOR HEART HEALTH

A common flavanone called hesperidin found in citrus fruit may help protect against heart disease, according to a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials published in *Current Developments in Nutrition*. Researchers analyzed 12 studies involving 589 participants that examined the effects of hesperidin extracts



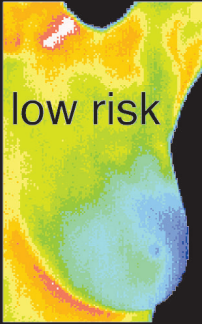
on various outcomes, such as inflammatory markers, body mass index, insulin resistance and lipids. After accounting for variability across the groups of participants, researchers found that hesperidin significantly reduced both total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad" cholesterol) in obese individuals under age 50 that consumed approximately 500 milligrams per day of hesperidin for more than six weeks. It also had a positive impact on inflammatory markers, insulin sensitivity and fasting blood glucose.

Beneficial effects were not noted on other risk factors of heart disease, such as high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good" cholesterol), triglycerides, body mass index and blood pressure. Hesperidin can be found in oranges, lemons, limes, tangerines and grapefruit, in whole fruit or juice form and in commercially available supplements. Consuming grapefruit might interfere with certain medications for heart disease, so patients should consult with their doctor before making any dietary changes.



DRUG MAY IMPROVE HEART HEALTH IN THE OBESE

According to a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM), semaglutide, a medication sold as Ozempic by Novo Nordisk, may be associated with heart-health improvement.



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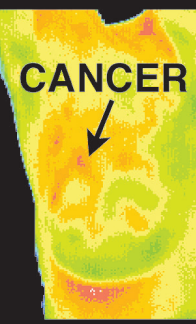
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For one year, the researchers followed 529 obese participants that had heart failure with ejection fraction, a condition where the heart pumps normally but is too stiff to fill properly. Half of the participants received semaglutide, and the other half received a placebo. Participants on semaglutide had almost double the heart improvement as measured by a standard heart failure questionnaire. They also experienced an average reduction of body weight of 13.3 percent (compared to a 2.5 percent reduction in the placebo group) and could walk an extra 66 feet in six minutes.

In another study of semaglutide also published in NEJM, participants on the drug had a 20 percent lower risk of fatal and non-fatal heart attacks and strokes than those taking a placebo. The multi-center, double-blind, randomized trial included more than 17,600 obese participants aged 45 or older that had cardiovascular disease, but no history of diabetes. Half of the participants received the drug, while the other half were given a placebo and were followed for approximately 40 months.

~ Advertorial ~



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BY MARIA SCHREIBER

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Bringing the Body into Inner Harmony



Elevate Mind and Bodywork was established in October 2020 as a safe space for all to heal, grow and be present with their bodies in a loving way. Owner Sarah Girard is medically trained in lymphatic drainage technique/manual lymphatic drainage through the Chikly Health Institute and is an Usui/Holy Fire™ III Reiki master. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science and uses her knowledge of the natural world as a grounding tool with her clients.

"Prior to opening Elevate Mind and Bodywork, I had spent the previous seven years providing bodywork in busy office environments," says Girard. "While I enjoyed the camaraderie of working alongside fellow healing practitioners, I felt called to hold space in peaceful and heart-centered sessions where people could really let go and be free." She explains that clients enjoy an overall easier sense of moving through the

world post-session, experiencing pain relief, peace of mind, ease of breathing, reduced inflammation, and a sense of being grounded or feeling centered, with feelings of peace, hope and joy.

Girard observes, "During sessions, clients sometimes see colors, visions or get messages from ancestors or guides. You are encouraged to tap into your own intuition and knowing, versus relying solely upon what the practitioner sees, feels or hears. When our bodies are free from mental, emotional or physical restrictions, we can see the innate light that we are. It is very empowering, liberating and revolutionary to feel at home in your own body and that you have the tools to bring peace to yourself and others."

Elevate Mind and Bodywork sessions are unique for every individual. Sessions have a main focus either on manual lymphatic

drainage or the energy body, depending upon the needs of the client. The two main offerings are embodied lymphatic therapy and reiki healing.

Embodied lymphatic therapy sessions are heart-centered sessions focused on manual lymphatic fluid movement through gentle stimulation and stretching of the skin towards the proper nodes. Clients are often guided through breathing exercises, visualizations, body scan and/or checking in with any tension patterns, emotions, or restrictions in the body. The goal is to encourage the parasympathetic (rest and digest) response, as this is also helpful in fluid movement and overall repair/healing. Clients are encouraged to continue the healing process between sessions by engaging in self-touch/self-lymphatic drainage.

Reiki healing sessions are hands-on healing from the heart that may include guided breathing, visualizations, cord cutting, chakra balancing, sound therapies, oracle cards and/or crystal healing, all while fully clothed under a blanket. Clients are encouraged to continue practices that raise their vibration between sessions.

Girard says, "I plan to expand my offerings by learning cupping therapy. I'm particularly excited about breast cupping as a tool to teach women how to take charge of their own self-care, breast health and lymphatic flow in this crucial area."

Elevate Mind and Bodywork is located at 1140 N. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor. For appointments and more information, call 734-883-1383 or visit Elevate.MassageTherapy.com. See ad page 31.



Tai Chi and Qigong in the Year of the Dragon



Peaceful Dragon School offers self-care practices for well-being and to reduce stress in daily life. Students feel welcome when they step into the safe, calm and joyful atmosphere of the school. Relaxation, energy work and meditation techniques increase balance and mindfulness, as well as promoting a sense of harmony and well-being. Master Wasantha Young says, “You will find that the high quality of education and professional care at the Peaceful Dragon School can support your personal goals.”



Wasantha Young

The school has offered year-round programs since 1990 in the traditional Chinese health arts of tai chi (yang style-short form) and qigong (energy work) for adults and youth. Day and evening classes, practice sessions, private sessions and intensives are

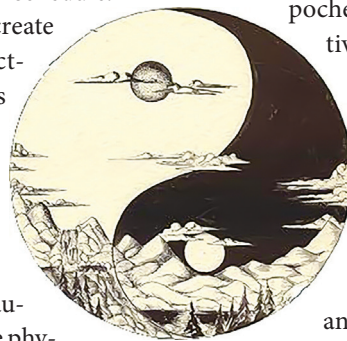
available. In addition to their collaborative relationship with the Ann Arbor Department of Recreation and Education and the University of Michigan, Peaceful Dragon allows local students and visitors from out of town to fit classes into their schedule. Their main objective is to create a safe, open-minded, respectful, peaceful and conscious attitude and atmosphere in which to study these complementary health-promoting art forms.

Young explains, “Aligning beautifully with your primary care physician’s guidance, classes at the Peaceful Dragon School can become a part of your health team and assist you in meeting the self-care practice goals you desire. A brief consultation about your goals can help you make the right choice between tai chi, energy work, muscle tension release, self-acupres-

sure, meditation techniques classes, mini-workshops or retreats.”

A practitioner since 1968, Young lectures and educates in Ann Arbor and nationally on tai chi, qigong, meditation and self-care practices as they relate to human emotional, spiritual and physical well-being. She is a founding board member of the Association of Women Martial Arts Instructors, and has taught at the Omega Institute, Institute for Transpersonal Psychology, in California, National Qigong Association, National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine, University of Michigan, United Auto Workers, Kaiser Wellness Foundation and the National Women’s Martial Artists Federation.

Grandmaster William CC Chen was Young’s first tai chi instructor when she learned the body mechanics and practical application. She has also studied with some of Professor Cheng Man-Ching’s prominent disciples. Young received formal training in Buddhist and Taoist meditation from Trungpa Rinpoche and Gia-Fu Feng, respectively, in addition to earning a master’s degree in transpersonal studies. Sharing her in-depth knowledge of practices that nurture the human spirit, promote health and foster respect for the balance between nature and human life helps to move students into a place of strength, harmony and well-being.



Peaceful Dragon School is located at 1945 Pauline Blvd., Ste. B, in Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-741-0695 or visit PeacefulDragonSchool.com. See ad page 31.



Oral Health Tips to Prevent Heart Disease

How Regular Trips to the Dentist Can Save a Life

by Steven Masley, M.D., FAHA, FACN, CNS



Heat disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and, despite public opinion, it is just as deadly for women as it is for men. The illness was responsible for a staggering one in every four male deaths and one in every five female deaths in 2021, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And yet, it is preventable 90 percent of the time with the right lifestyle choices, such as saying goodbye to cigarettes, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, reducing alcohol intake and keeping stress at bay.

Other powerful precautions relate to oral health. Left untreated, gum disease and sleep apnea have the potential to cause dire cardiovascular consequences. The good news is that treatments are available to decrease and often eradicate their threat.

Gum Disease and the Heart

Although blood pressure and cholesterol are considered major risk factors for heart disease, there is another culprit that should not be ignored: inflammation. While arterial inflammation may be the vascular response to harmful assaults such as infections or injuries,

it can also arise when there is an imbalance in the gut microbiome or inflammation of the gums—also known as periodontal disease.

According to the National Institutes of Health, gum disease affects 47 percent of adults aged 30 or older and 70 percent of adults by age 65. Bleeding gums are telltale signs of gingivitis, which can promote the growth of disease-causing bacteria and produce substantial, body-wide inflammation.

A 2021 study published in *Scientific Reports* evaluated the effect that oral health problems had on all-cause, cardiovascular disease and respiratory mortality. Scientists followed almost 3,000 white and African American men and women aged 70 to 79, as well as just over 7,700 British men aged 40 to 59 for nine and 15 years, respectively. Researchers reported that periodontal disease was associated with increased cardiovascular mortality in the American group, a finding that was consistent with a similar study of older people in Taiwan. The scientists also noted that tooth loss and cumulative oral health problems correlated with higher all-cause mortality and higher respiratory mortality, while dry mouth appeared to be related to only all-cause mortality.

A 2012 study published in *Kardiologia Polska* of people with diabetes and periodontal disease showed that gum inflammation was highly correlated with increasing arterial plaque, as well as increases in markers of inflammation and blood pressure levels, suggesting a significant connection between periodontal disease and an increased risk of atherosclerosis.

Another study published in 2013 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* followed more than 400 subjects over three years and found that greater gum inflammation and higher growth of pathological bacterial species in the gums were strongly associated with increased growth of arterial plaque. The researchers concluded that

an improvement in periodontal status was associated with less progression in carotid atherosclerosis, thereby emphasizing the importance of gum care as a possible preventive health measure.

Preventing Gum Inflammation

In addition to a healthy diet, exercise and stress management, taking measures to improve dental hygiene will go a long way toward reducing the risk of heart disease. A dental hygienist can easily identify gingivitis and probe for deep gum pockets—an indication of periodontal disease—while a simple saliva test can determine the presence of disease-causing gum species. The following measures are recommended:

- Brush teeth for two minutes twice daily, ideally with an electric toothbrush.
- Floss and use a Waterpik every day.
- Visit the dental hygienist two to four times per year for a thorough cleaning.
- Have the dentist measure gum-pocket depth to check for inflammation.
- Especially for those with gum disease, have saliva tested for bad bacteria at least annually.

Sleep Apnea

Considered and treated as an oral health issue, sleep apnea increases the risk for heart disease. According to the American Medical Association, approximately 30 million Americans experience sleep apnea, but only 6 million are diagnosed with the condition where breathing and air flow repeatedly stops and starts. People that suffer from this ailment are more likely to experience abnormal heart rhythms, hypertension, heart attacks, strokes and diabetes, the Mayo Clinic cautions.

Sleep apnea gradually worsens over time. As the airway increasingly fails to deliver air to the lungs, oxygen levels drop, causing

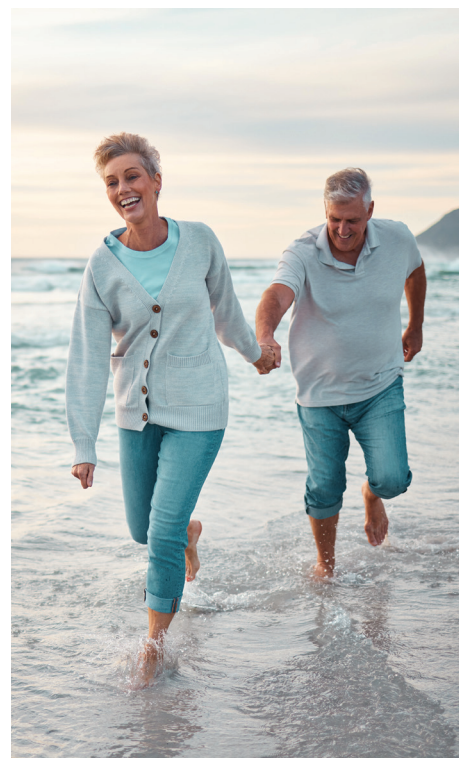
adverse impacts on the heart and brain. Three factors decrease airflow: weight gain, aging and, for some people, genetics. When a person puts on extra weight, their neck thickens, diminishing the airway, and as we age, tissues in the neck become softer and sag.

The symptoms for sleep apnea include excessive daytime sleepiness, loud snoring, noticeable stops in breathing at night, awakening with a dry mouth and morning headaches. These symptoms should prompt a discussion with a physician or dentist to schedule an overnight sleep test to confirm a diagnosis—either in a sleep laboratory or at home, depending on the degree of symptoms.

The mainstay of treatment for those with sleep apnea is a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device worn over the nose or mouth to maintain pressure in the airway, keeping it open during sleep. Alternatively, a dentist can fit a patient with a mandibular device to help open the airway. The implement looks like a mouthguard that pushes the jaw forward to make the airway larger and improve airflow at night.

Another technique is to tape a patient's mouth shut while sleeping to force breathing through the nose. Continuous nose breathing helps promote nitric oxide in the bloodstream, which induces the relaxation and dilation of blood vessels and airways. Duct tape or another household tape should not be used for this, as there are specially designed, hypoallergenic strips that are shaped to sit directly on the lips. Some have a small vent that allows for a little mouth breathing. In a small study published in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*, mouth taping led to significantly less snoring and fewer instances of lapsed breathing in 30 patients with mild sleep apnea.

After starting a chosen therapy, the overnight sleep test should be repeated to



confirm that the airway is open and adequate oxygenation levels are being maintained. Additional tips to reduce sleep apnea include:

- Lose weight. According to the Sleep Foundation, a loss of 5 to 10 percent of total weight improves obstructive sleep apnea by 38 percent, and weight loss of more than 10 percent results in a nearly 49 percent improvement.
- Avoid alcohol and sleeping medications before bedtime, which suppress breathing and cause the airway to sag.
- Change from back-sleeping to side-sleeping. More than 50 percent of people with sleep apnea find that their symptoms worsen when they sleep on their backs.

Steven Masley is a physician, nutritionist, trained chef, clinical professor at the University of South Florida, chief medical director of KnoWEwell and creator of health programs for public television. He is the author of The 30-Day Heart Tune-Up. Connect at DrMasley.com.



Let Your Heart Smile

by Dr. Keith Dobracki, DDS, ND, IAOMT

Fun Mouth Facts

- The inside of the mouth has as many bacteria as there are people on Earth.
- Like bones, teeth are alive.
- Eighty-five percent of people can curl their tongue into a tube.
- Teeth are the hardest substance in the human body.
- A tongue print is as unique as a fingerprint.
- Without saliva, we would have no sense of taste.

Now more than ever, oral pathogens are negatively disrupting our systemic well-being. The most recognized concerns of these harmful bugs are coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases because it

is very easy for these pathogens to travel from our mouth directly into our heart.

Our mouths have more bacteria than human cells, and in many ways parallel the way our

gut functions. The human body is essentially one big, long, fancy tube, after all. There are more than 20 billion bacteria living in the mouth, and they outnumber cells by 10 to one. The purpose of this robust oral bacterial

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terrain is to maintain optimal oral health by remineralizing teeth, limiting harmful bacteria and keeping the gums and mouth balanced.

Unfortunately, oral pathogens are constantly looking for a suitable environment to invade. The mouth, being dark, wet and full of food, provides a hospitable home. This delicate environment must maintain a constant, fragile balance between teeth, saliva, bacteria, gums, bones and muscles. If that balance is disrupted, it creates a window for the pathogens to enter the body and wreak havoc.

When bad bacteria enter an environment of poor oral health, missing teeth, cavities or gum inflammation, they use their innate mechanisms to become embedded as a part of the oral biofilm, a highly ordered polymicrobial community, using cells, waste and other bacteria to effectively hide and cause the disease process. This is essentially a protection cloak for the bad bacteria to survive.

These bacteria contribute to rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, carcinomas, musculoskeletal problems, respiratory diseases, strokes, birth complications and cardiovascular disease. They can also quickly cause gingivitis and periodontitis. The mouth is very dense with blood capillaries (second-most dense after the heart) where bacteria can easily enter the bloodstream. That can cause destructive inflammation to the vessels.

This process may also cause tiny blood clots, and certain bacteria found in blood vessels after heart attacks and strokes are only found in the mouth. The American Heart Association and the American Dental Association have both conducted clinical and peer reviewed studies linking heart disease with periodontal disease. Thus, people with periodontal disease have a 200 to 300 percent greater risk of heart attack and stroke, and patients with artificial heart valves are at the highest risk.

There are many treatments available to help with this process, but an early diagnosis is the most favorable, along with daily prevention with proper oral hygiene techniques. Technological advancements have led to detailed clinical testing that can be performed by dentists to test the oral biofilm bacteria in the mouth and understand systemic health risk factors. These tests usually rate the bacteria on a danger/risk scale and demonstrate the systemic disease correlation factors they possess.

Treatments can range from in-office prophylaxis, ozone, oral terrain management, use of correct oral prebiotics and probiotics, proper home care products, nutrition and diet coaching, surgical care, pH balancing, supplements and others.

Dr. Keith Dobracki is the owner of Ann Arbor's Dentist, located at 606 W. Stadium Blvd., in Ann Arbor. For appointments and more information, call 734-747-6400 or visit AnnArborsDentist.com. See Dr. D and his family on the front cover this month and his ad on page 3.

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Mimi Guarneri on Treating the Heart With Love

by Sandra Yeyati

After graduating first in her class at The State University of New York Medical Center, Dr. Mimi Guarneri began her career at Scripps Clinic, in San Diego, as an attending physician in interventional cardiology, where she placed thousands of coronary stents. Recognizing the need for more comprehensive and holistic approaches, she founded the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine and served as medical director for 15 years, combining state-of-the-art cardiac imaging technology with lifestyle programs and alternative therapies like acupuncture, healing touch, meditation and yoga to diagnose, prevent and treat cardiovascular disease.

Guarneri is board certified in cardiovascular disease, internal medicine, nuclear



cardiology and integrative holistic medicine. She is a founder and president of The Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine; co-founder and medical director of Guarneri Integrative Health, in La Jolla, California; and a clinical associate

professor at University of California, San Diego. In 2012, The Institute for Functional Medicine honored her with the Linus Pauling Functional Medicine Lifetime Achievement Award. Guarneri is the author of *The Heart Speaks: A Cardiologist Reveals the Secret Language of Healing* and *108 Pearls to Awaken Your Healing Potential*.

What is holistic cardiology?

It's about treating the whole person—body, mind, emotions and spirit. If you have a tree with sick fruit on it, you can keep cutting off the branches, or you can ask, what does the tree need? Does it need more sunlight or water? How is the soil? Does it have minerals?

With patients, the question we should be asking is why does someone have diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease? And then you ask, what is the soil of a human life made of? That soil is made of micro and macro nutrients, physical activity, having a purpose in life, joy and a good night's sleep. At our center we call these the pearls of health.

How do you diagnose people by listening to their stories?

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When people have major, life-changing events—death of a spouse or child, divorce—all of a sudden, they start having cancer, sudden death and heart attacks.

So, when I look at someone that had a heart attack, I don't just want to know about their symptoms the day of the attack. I also want to know what was going on six months before, because that's where you find the story. "I've been under stress. I lost my job. I lost my house. My wife told me they wanted a divorce." This is where you start to get the stories that add up to the ultimate cardiovascular event.

How do you translate that inquiry into the healing journey?

Everyone needs something different at a different point in their life. Some people need to change what they're eating or start walking, but then you have to look at why they're not taking care of their physical body. Depressed people say, "I have 20 friends in this pack of cigarettes." They don't say, "Let me eat Brussels sprouts and take a walk." I have to deal with the underlying issue, which could be things like depression, stress or loneliness. I also want to know my patient's spirituality, because if they believe in a higher power, we can tap into that to give them strength and help transform what's going on.

What tools do you have in your integrative medical arsenal?

The whole framework of integrative medicine is to understand and use the wisdom of other global healing traditions. For a patient with back pain, I may use healing touch, acupuncture, massage and medication. I may send somebody who is stressed to transcendental meditation training. I may pull from Ayurveda to help people with digestive issues.

The most important thing is looking at your life and finding joy, meaning, purpose, looking at where you can serve, where you can connect. This is the piece that is missing in many people's lives. Also, look at where you are holding onto anger. Have you done your forgiveness work? How can you begin to practice gratitude?

Why do you say that patients are motivated not by fear but by caring?

They're motivated by love. Love is the secret ingredient. People will do everything for three months after a heart attack because they're terrified, and then they go back to their old ways. They start to gain weight because they never did the deep work to look at what got them there in the first place.

A perfect example is one of my heart patients who came in with a walker. She said she had sciatica, and immediately we gave her a shot for her pain. We also did some acupuncture. I got a beautiful message from her the next day, which made no mention of the shot or the acupuncture. Instead, she said, "I felt so much better from the second you gave me a hug." It's that kind of connection that makes all the difference.

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings.

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Plant-Based Milk Alternatives

Benefits for People and the Planet

by Carrie Jackson



While plant-based milks have been around for centuries, they have historically played second fiddle to other dairy alternatives, but not anymore. As people are becoming more conscious of the impact their food choices have on their health and the planet, plant-based milk has turned into a mainstay in most grocery stores. Touting sustainability benefits, a creamy texture and pleasing flavors, soy, oat, almond, cashew and even macadamia nut milks are having their moment.

According to the Good Food Institute, 41 percent of American households purchased plant-based milk in 2022. Most major milk brands, such as Nestlé, are offering plant-based alternatives, while specialty companies like Elmhurst 1925 and Eden Foods are continually expanding their selection.

“Plant-based dairy is now more than 15 percent of the milk industry,” says Elysa-beth Alfano, co-founder and CEO of VegTech Invest, a firm that manages the

first exchange-traded fund dedicated to plant-based companies. “This is driven by the quality of the products, including oat, almond, soy, pea and hemp milks as proven options. With 65 percent of people worldwide and more than 80 percent of African Americans and more than 90 percent of Asian Americans being lactose intolerant, plant-based milk is a great alternative.”

When selecting beverage options, many consumers also weigh a company’s ethical choices. Alfano predicts the beginning of the end of traditional factory farming, saying, “People are seeing how inefficient and harmful meat production is and are making the connection between saving the environment and their lifestyle choices.”

Leah Hoxie, senior vice president of innovation at Oatly North America, observes, “People opt for nondairy milk for a variety of reasons that are usually personal and nuanced. These can include allergies, nutrition, ethical and environmental concerns, and, of course, taste. Oatly makes nondairy milk alternatives that have the same creamy taste, frothy feel and functionality as cow’s milk while also generally having a lower climate impact. We’re also seeing generational differences in milk preferences, with a recent Oatly flash poll finding that 54 percent of Gen Z and 49 percent of Millennials prefer plant-based milk to cow’s milk.”

Like many other plant-based companies, Oatly has expressed a commitment to creating lasting environmental change. “With

Just because something is plant-based doesn't automatically make it healthier.

roughly one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions coming from the food system, and about half of those emissions coming from the livestock or the animal-based sector, the greatest impact we at Oatly can have as a company is to convert people from dairy milk to oat milk. Our research shows that Oatly Barista sold in the U.S. has a 46 percent lower climate impact than comparable cow's milk, supporting our larger mission to make it easy for people to eat better and live healthier lives without recklessly taxing the planet's resources in the process," explains Hoxie.

While plant-based milk alternatives may tout health benefits, the specific ingredients and processing methods play a role in their nutritional value. Just because something is plant-based doesn't automatically make it healthier. "There are misconceptions that either nondairy milks are automatically less healthy than cow milk or that they are inherently more nutritious, but the truth is it depends on what's in the milk," says Taylor Wolfram, a registered dietitian who specializes in vegan nutrition.

Plant-based dairy alternatives have differing nutritional advantages, and it is best for consumers to make their own comparison. "Soy and pea milk—the protein superstars of plant milks—contain some fat and, when fortified, are an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D," Wolfram explains. "Hemp has a little less protein, and oat and almond milks are very low in protein. Hemp milk is rich in ALA [alpha-linolenic acid, a type of omega-3 fatty acid found in plants]. Nondairy milks may or may not contain added sugars and fats or be fortified, so it is best to check the nutrition facts panel to see what levels of nutrients each specific product contains."

Ultimately, the best plant-based dairy may be the one we love to consume. "Enjoyment and taste are highly subjective experiences," Wolfram says. "I encourage folks to try different options and find what they like."

Carrie Jackson is an Illinois-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.

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Chef AJ's Popeye's Perfection

YIELD: 2 SERVINGS

1 cup water or unsweetened nondairy milk
 12 oz baby organic spinach
 1 small shallot
 1 large date (or more to taste), soaked
 1 cup ripe avocado
 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
 3 oz oil-free, salt-free sun-dried tomatoes
 Hemp seeds for garnish

Place the water or nondairy milk and the sun-dried tomatoes in a high-powered blender and process until dissolved. Add the spinach, shallot and date and process again until smooth. Add the avocado and lemon juice and blend briefly until smooth. Sprinkle with hemp seeds, if desired.

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Chef AJ's Caramel Blondies

YIELD: 16-20 COOKIES

8 oz pitted dates
 8 oz unsweetened nondairy milk
 3 tsp vanilla powder, divided
 2 cups white sweet potato flesh
 1½ cups rolled oats
 ½ cup millet, ground into flour
 1 tsp cinnamon
 2 cups mashed banana (approximately 3 bananas)
 Reduced-fat shredded coconut

Soak the dates in the nondairy milk for several hours or overnight so they are very soft. Create a paste by placing the dates, soaking liquid and 1 teaspoon of vanilla powder into a food processor fitted with the “S” blade, and processing until smooth. Remove ¾ cup of the date paste and place in the refrigerator to chill; this will be the frosting.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Place the remaining ingredients, including 2 teaspoons of vanilla powder, into the food processor with the remaining date paste, and process until smooth. Pour the batter into a 9-inch square silicone baking pan and bake for 30 to 40 minutes (a shorter baking time will produce a moister blondie). Turn the oven off and allow the pan to cool in the oven.

Once the blondies are completely cool, frost with the chilled frosting. Sprinkling the cookies with reduced-fat shredded coconut is optional. Chill and cut into bars.

Chef's Notes: White sweet potatoes are also called Hannah or Jersey yams. Japanese or Murasaki sweet potatoes, which have a purple skin and white flesh, could be used as a substitute. Orange and purple sweet potatoes are not recommended for this recipe. Millet helps mitigate the gummy texture of oats.

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No-Bake Pumpkin Dairy-Free Cheesecake

YIELD: 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

1 packet (sleeve) graham crackers, finely ground
 4 Tbsp coconut oil, gently warmed
 16 oz nondairy cream cheese, room temperature
 1 cup powdered sugar
 ½ cup pumpkin puree
 1 Tbsp pumpkin pie spice
 ½ tsp salt

In the food processor, grind the graham crackers until they are as fine as possible. Add the coconut oil and pulse to combine. Transfer the mixture to an 8-inch springform pan and firmly press into an even layer, bringing the mixture about 1 inch up the sides of the pan. Transfer to the fridge to chill while making the filling. In a mixer with a paddle attachment, or using a hand beater, mix the nondairy cream cheese, powdered sugar, pumpkin puree, pumpkin pie spice and salt until smooth and uniform. Pour into the prepared crust and smooth into an even layer. Transfer to the fridge and chill for 3 hours, or overnight. When ready to serve, remove the outer ring of the springform pan. Slice and enjoy.

Recipe courtesy of Caroline Schiff, a James Beard-nominated executive pastry chef.



Mindful Breathwork

Managing Stress and Heart Health

by Sheila Julson



The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are key partners in regulating heart rate, stress levels and breathing. Stressors such as traffic jams, work deadlines, financial limitations and family conflicts can disrupt this synchronized partnership and lead not just to emotional anguish, but also to high blood pressure, inflammation and increased cardiovascular events.

An inquiry into how breathing relates to the nervous system begins with the vagus nerve, the largest highway within the parasympathetic nervous system. The vagus nerve runs from the brain and through the body, down to the gastrointestinal system. “It is the most complex of the cranial nerves and regulates heart rate and the body’s stress response,” says Poonacha Machaiah, CEO of The Chopra Foundation.

Machaiah suggests breathwork as an effective mind-body practice to balance the nervous system and instill calm. It can serve as a pillar, along with nourishment, movement, restful sleep and connection with community and nature, toward maintaining homeostasis in the body. “Breathing is free medicine,” he asserts. “It is your anchor, and every breathwork technique starts with observing your breath and connecting with yourself and your body.”

Stress or anxiousness sends the sympathetic nervous system into overdrive, affirms Meena Malhotra, M.D., a functional medicine practitioner and founder of Chicago-based Heal n Cure integrative clinic. The goal of breathwork, a catchall term for a variety of breathing practices, is to balance the autonomic nervous system. Many breathing techniques involve holding the breath, which stimulates the vagus nerve.

“Deep breathing is the best way to stretch and stimulate the vagus nerve,” Malhotra explains. “When the vagus nerve is stimulated, the parasympathetic nervous system is activated. Stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system is calming, which helps bring the body into balance.”

Just like how there are various types of yoga to achieve different goals, the same holds true for breathwork. “There’s something for everyone,” notes Sandy Abrams, the Los-Angeles-based founder of The C.E.Om and author of *Breathe to Succeed: Increase Workplace Productivity, Creativity, and Clarity Through the Power of Mindfulness*. “Breathwork is the love language of the nervous system. Being in a state of frequent, chronic stress—even low-grade—makes it difficult to enjoy any experience. Breathwork can calm, balance or boost the nervous system. Simply by breathing in

ways that calm the nervous system, you can immediately shift from stressed to calm.”

Abrams recommends simple breathing practices that don’t take a lot of time. “The nervous system can become more balanced and relaxed with even just one slow, light, nourishing breath,” she remarks. For beginners, she suggests shifting from shallow, rapid chest breaths, which can induce stress, to deeper ones that activate the diaphragm. “It helps to place one hand on the belly and feel the expansion outward as you inhale for about six seconds, tracing the breath up to the chest and then slowly exhaling for six seconds.”

The popular “four-seven-eight” method involves inhaling for a count of four, holding the breath for a count of seven and exhaling for a count of eight. “Four-seven-eight is a very effective stress reduction tool,” Malhotra says. “I suggest that everyone do it while stuck in traffic or while that hourglass cursor on the laptop is spinning. Instead of checking your email or fidgeting with your phone, do a breathing exercise.”

Other techniques may employ longer or shorter counts, but Abrams notes that there is no need to obsess over counting—just go by feeling. “Relaxation comes with extended exhales that are about twice as long as the inhale,” she asserts.

Abrams also uses the “bumblebee” technique, which increases nitric oxide to the nasal cavity. Simply inhale lightly and deeply through the nose and during the entire exhale, make a humming sound. The hum can be amplified by gently closing the ears.

The kid-friendly “lion’s breath” helps release stagnant energy. “Close your eyes and inhale through your nose. During the exhale, open your eyes wide, stick out your tongue and shake your hands. Hiss like a fierce lion,” Abrams advises. “Adding movement feels good and makes everybody laugh; laughter is breath, too.” Parents can use the lion’s breath to calm rowdy children in the car or while shopping. It can also help children learn to control their emotions.

Abrams notes that her breathwork techniques are for relaxation and balancing the nervous system; those with contraindications should consult a physician. Malhotra adds that there are other ways besides breathwork to stimulate the vagus nerve, but some are not safe to do at home and should be done only under the guidance of a medical doctor.

“These breath tools are free and accessible to anyone,” Abrams says. “They can be used in so many different ways, at different times. I encourage everyone to play around with their curiosity about these different breath tools.”

Sheila Julson is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings.



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Love on a Leash

Mutual Benefits of Walking the Dog

by Dr. Ruth Roberts, DVM, CVA, CVH, CVFT, NAN



The emotional bond between dogs and humans is a powerful force that extends beyond mere companionship. Known for their unwavering loyalty and intuitive understanding, dogs offer a source of comfort and emotional support. In return, the companionship and care provided by humans create a sense of security and happiness for their canine friends. The seemingly ordinary act of dog walking can bring vitality and other benefits to those on both ends of the leash.

Emotional Health Benefits

Strengthening Bonds: In a study conducted at Manchester Metropolitan University, in England, researchers aimed to understand how humans and their animal companions actively share spaces, specifically through the lens of walking experiences. The study called into question a common perception that humans always dominate, showing that during walks, power is negotiated through mutual interaction, disproving the idea that authority goes only one way. This understanding reveals the complex bond formed during walks, emphasizing that power is shared, adding to the special and mutually helpful connection between humans and their dogs.

Spending Time Together: Walking creates shared moments. Whether exploring familiar places or trying new routes, these shared experiences become lasting memories that make the connection between dogs and owners even stronger.

Communicating Nonverbally: While walking, owners and dogs interact without words. The leash becomes a kind of language, where owners express feelings and intentions through body language and energy, helping them understand each other better.

Fostering Trust: Walking builds trust and reliance. Dogs trust their owners to guide and protect them during walks, creating a sense of safety and mutual dependence, which deepens their bond.

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Enjoying Quality Time and Affection: Walking is a time for closeness and affection. A simple pat, a gentle scratch or just being near each other during walks creates moments of connection that strengthen the emotional tie between dogs and their owners.

Physical Health Benefits

Physical Well-Being: The relationship between dogs and humans contributes significantly to the physical health of both parties. For Melissa Sherman, an animal communicator, energy healer and holistic pet health coach, a walk is more than just a routine. It is a holistic strategy to improve her pets' well-being. Leading her pack of seven dogs through daily forest walks becomes a channel for physical vitality, mental engagement and emotional catharsis. Sherman's insight reinforces the idea that regular nature walks contribute not only to the physical health but also to the overall happiness of both dogs and their human companions.

Exercise Opportunity: Regular activities like dog walks also provide valuable exercise for their human counterparts. Research published in *The Gerontologist* indicates that older adults that regularly walk their dogs are more likely to meet physical activity recommendations and exhibit greater functional ability compared to non-dog owners.

Cardiovascular Health: An assessment of studies and data by the American Heart Association concluded that dog ownership is likely linked to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. This positive association is primarily attributed to the active practice of dog walking.

Quality-of-Life Benefits

Stress Reduction: Studies have shown that the presence of a dog can have a calming effect on humans, reducing stress levels and promoting overall mental well-being. The simple act of petting a dog releases feel-good hormones, creating a harmonious cycle of emotional support.

Increased Happiness: Dogs bring joy and a sense of purpose to human lives, particularly for those living alone or facing health challenges. The responsibilities of caring for a pet instill a routine and structure that contribute to an enhanced quality of life.

Unconditional Love and Companionship: Perhaps the most profound aspect of this bond is the unconditional love and companionship exchanged between dogs and humans. Dogs are non-judgmental, offering a constant source of emotional support and companionship. In return, humans provide the care, attention and love that form the bedrock of this unique relationship.

Ruth Roberts is an integrative veterinarian and holistic health coach for pets, as well as the creator of The Original CrockPet Diet. Learn more at DrRuthRoberts.com.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Intro to Mastering Mindfulness Meditation – 7-9pm. Embark on a transformative journey with our 2-hr introductory workshop, a perfect prelude to the Mastering Mindfulness Meditation 6-wk course (Mondays, Feb 12-Mar 18). \$20. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 517-442-6029. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Winter Birding – 8-10am. We'll gaze upon nuthatches foraging, a hawk soaring overhead looking for a meal, and enjoy many other daily routines of winter birds. With Kelsey Dehring. All levels welcome. Bring binoculars. Goodrich Preserve, 3695 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Dexter Winter Marketplace – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Dexter United Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Ele.Mental Health: Rituals for Wellness – 6:30-7:30pm. Each week we will practice weekly mindfulness, movement, and ritual using scientifically proven techniques to improve mental health. Feb 6: Fire Ritual; Intro to Somatic Therapies; Movement Medicine. \$40/class. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. Chrissie: 734-681-0219. Omni-Integrative-Wellness.com/elementintensive.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Wonder Walk: Fragrance Fiesta: Aromas Unveiled – 5:30-6:30pm. Immerse yourself in the romantic ambiance of Valentine's Day as you join us on a delightful walk, where fragrances become a sensory experience. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-647-7600. mbgna.umich.edu.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

10 Tasty Ways to Boost Brain Health and Mood – 6:30pm. Learn about 10 simple and tasty things you can do every single day that can support a healthy brain and happy mood. Presented by Nichole Dandrea-Russert, MS, RDN, plant-based dietitian nutritionist, and founder of *PurelyPlanted.com*. Zoom. VegMichigan.org.

Afro-Caribbean Improvisational Trio: Nite Bjuti – 7-8:30pm. Nite Bjuti is Candice Hoyes, Val Jeanty and Mimi Jones, an evocative improvised trio of Afro-Caribbean artists using electronics, vocalism, bass, Haitian drum rhythms, sampling and spoken word to cultivate their narrative

journey. Free. Keene Theater, East Quad, 701 E University Ave, Ann Arbor. Tinyurl.com/433uavh4.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Night to Shine – 5-11:30pm. Volunteers needed to help for people with special needs is an unforgettable prom night experience for people ages 14 and older. Admission free. 2142 Community Church, 648 S Wagner Rd, Ann Arbor. Register: 242community.com/our-events/night-to-shine. TimTebowFoundation.org/night-to-shine.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Superb Owl Sunday – 10am-12pm. Come meet some of our resident raptors, dissect owl pellets, and enjoy owl-related crafts and activities. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. Discover ScienceAndNature.org.

Wonder Walk: Fragrance Fiesta: Aromas Unveiled – 1-2pm. See Feb 7 listing. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-647-7600. mbgna.umich.edu.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Mastering Mindfulness Meditation – Mondays, Feb 12-Mar 18. 7-8:30pm. With Tina Shafer. A comprehensive 6-wk course designed to guide you on a transformative journey into the heart of meditation. \$12/class, \$60/series. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 517-442-6029. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Sunrise Nature Hike – 8:30-10am. Join naturalist Elle Bogle for a morning hike in the wonderful winter air. Draper-Houston Meadows Preserve, 569 Mooreville Rd, Milan. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Ele.Mental Health: Rituals for Wellness – 6:30-7:30pm. Each week we will practice weekly mindfulness, movement, and ritual using scientifically proven techniques

to improve mental health. Feb 13: Water Ritual; Functional Imagery; Self-Regulation Tools. \$40/class. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. Chrissie: 734-681-0219. Omni-Integrative-Wellness.com/elementintensive.

Controlled Burn Program – 7-8:30pm. Meeting will be a discussion about NAP's Controlled Ecological Burn Program. Ask questions and learn more about the benefits of effectively and safely using fire as a restoration tool. NAP Office, 3875 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. A2Gov.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

The Innocents featuring Allen Otte and John Lane – 7-8:30pm. A post-performance discussion will follow with The Innocents, David Moran, Clinical Professor of Law and co-founder of the Michigan Innocence Clinic, and Richard Phillips, a client of the Michigan Innocence Clinic who was exonerated in 2018 and 2022 after serving 45 yrs in prison. Free. Free. Keene Theater, East Quad, 701 E University Ave, Ann Arbor. Tinyurl.com/4pshy84d.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Yoga Teacher Training Begins – 13-wk, 200-hr course certified through the Yoga Alliance. Develop sustainable tools for your life-long practice yoga and meditation practice. Zion Well, 3384 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. ZionWell.com.

Inner Guidance for Answers, Protection and Love – 7-8pm. You are not alone. Help can come as a nudge, a dream, a vision, or a quiet voice within you. Will discuss ways to connect with this ever-present loving guidance to navigate life, ignite creativity and attune to your true self. Free. EckMI.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Controlled Burn Crew Training – 12pm. A required training session for anyone interested in assisting with NAP's controlled burns. Burns typically take place Mon-Fri between 12-7pm. Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor. Registration required by Feb 15: nap.a2gov.org/BurnTraining2024.

Ann Arbor Wild Ones February Monthly Meeting – 6:45-8pm. Topic: Caring for What We Love. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Auditorium, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Dexter Winter Marketplace – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Dexter United Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Ongoing Events

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Just for Kids: Perfect Pasta – 11am-12pm. We firmly believe that pasta, despite being a universal “safe food” for many kids, young and old, deserves its time in the sun as a categorically good food that tastes even better for kids when it's made with really good ingredients. \$25. Zingerman's Delicatessen, 422 Detroit St, Ann Arbor. 734-663-3354. ZingermansDeli.com.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Ele.Mental Health: Rituals for Wellness – 6:30-7:30pm. Each week we will practice weekly mindfulness, movement, and ritual using scientifically proven techniques to improve mental health. Feb 20: Spirit Ritual; Gratitude Practice; Letter to Spirit. \$40/class. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. Chris-sie: 734-681-0219. Omni-Integrative-Wellness.com/elementintensive.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Wonder Walk: Fragrance Fiesta: Scent and Well-Being – 5:30-6:30pm. Immerse yourself in the romantic ambiance of Valentine's Day as you join us on a delightful walk, where fragrances become a sensory experience. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-647-7600. mbgna.umich.edu.

Open Stage – 8pm. Take your music to the masses. Open Stage nights offer supportive audiences and a terrific space. Fifteen performers have 8 mins (or 2 songs) each to do their thing. \$3, \$2/members, seniors, students. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Book Club Discussion: Protest Kitchen – 6:30pm. Will talk about *Protest Kitchen*, which is both a cookbook and a manual for fighting injustices with our food choices. Free. Zoom. VegMichigan.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

The Ark's 37th Annual Storytelling Festival: Liar's Contest – 8pm. Includes 6 first-class liars and 6 celebrity judges. \$15. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Full Moon Owl Hike – 6-8pm. Bundle up for a sparkling hike in the light of the full moon. Led by Shawn Severance and Matt Spoor from Washtenaw Audubon. West Lake Preserve, 14980 Waterloo Rd, Chelsea. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The Ark's 37th Annual Storytelling Festival Family Show – 1pm. Master storytellers Lyn Ford and Genot Picor deliver an entertaining family-friendly show. \$15, \$10/kids 12 and under. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

Wonder Walk: Fragrance Fiesta: Scent and Well-Being – 1-2pm. See Feb 21 listing. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-647-7600. mbgna.umich.edu.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Michigan Botanical Society Meeting – 7:30-9pm. Gina Baucom: Herbicide adaptation as a model for integrating across genetics, ecology and evolution. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-647-7600. mbgna.umich.edu.

Artist Spotlight: Rachael Kilgour – 8pm. “A heartfelt slice of master crafted indie folk,” *Billboard*. Free; please bring a non-perishable food donation for Food Gatherers. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Open Stage – 8pm. Take your music to the masses. Open Stage nights offer supportive audiences and a terrific space. Fifteen performers have 8 mins (or 2 songs) each to do their thing. \$3, \$2/members, seniors, students. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

PLAN AHEAD

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Sound Healing Certification – Mar 16-19. Two-and-four-day sound and vibrational double certifications. In-person instruction includes Level 1: Practitioner of Sound Healing Certification; and Level 2: Practitioner of Vibrational Therapy Certification. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. 248-962-5475. 7Notes-NaturalHealth.com.

MONDAY, MARCH 18

Spring Tree and Shrub Sale Pre-ordering Closes – Orders available to pick up from 1-6pm, Apr 26, and 9-11am, Apr 27. Remaining trees and shrubs can be purchased in-person starting at 10am, Apr 27. Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd, Ann Arbor. Washtenawcd.org/trees.

DAILY

Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Imagine Fitness & Yoga Special Offer – Thru Feb. For new clients: 10 classes for \$135 (valid for 3 months). 3100 W Liberty, Ann Arbor. 734-622-8119. Discount: ImagineFitnessAndYoga.com/pricing.

Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. \$75. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Holistic Health Consultation – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations last about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. \$150. For appt: LivingWisdomCoaching.earth.

Pets & Parents Reiki Session – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end of life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. \$20. 231-590-0001. tc desoto@gmail.com.

The Best Affirmation for You – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. TinyLions.org.

WEEKLY

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. \$79 (regular \$149). Yoga Room, 889



Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDebBurton.com. YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care.

SUNDAYS

Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 LiveWeb – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. BachFlowerSchool.com.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. \$10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmunt2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Drop-In Tarot Study Group – 6:30-9pm. A drop-in group of tarot enthusiasts facilitated by Nicholas O'Donnell, using the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck. \$15. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-299-6472. NicksVictoryGardens@gmail.com. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

MONDAYS

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free, donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Beginner Tai Chi – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Soul Power Mystic Arts – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling, and cultivate the nature mystic within through four

retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qigong, plant ally ceremonies, and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. MotherBearSanctuary.com.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Monday to receive the info about how to join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.



Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmunt2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Hypnotherapy – 9:30am-7pm, by appt. Also Wed. Cheryl Beshada teaches and specializes in personal empowerment, releasing blocks and patterns of negative behavior, higher self-communication. Free consultation. Warren. 586-899-9009.

5 Hidden Gems in Your Normal Blood Work – 8-9pm. 3rd Tues. Join Dr. Jena for her Bloodwork Webinar and learn 5 hidden gems that can help you go from unhealthy to healthy. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

WEDNESDAYS

Get the Most from Your DNA Test – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share

that information. Course 39651. \$59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. wccnet.edu/noncredit.

Your Lipid Panel: What Bad Cholesterol Really Means – 8-9pm. 3rd Wed. Grab your latest bloodwork and let's dive into your blood work and let me teach you how to look for hidden answers. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

THURSDAYS

Class Observation – 11-11:45am. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Qigong: Basics – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. \$180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

Thursday Evening Silent Meditation – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free, donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Meditation Class – 7-8pm. Short lesson and meditation, followed by discussion with instructor Lori Barresi. Drop-in, every other Thur. \$10. Enlightened Soul Center, 3820 Packard, Ste 280, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

The Thyroid Panel: Get the Real Story of What's Happening with Your Thyroid – 8-9pm. 3rd Thurs. Learn how to find hidden answers in the bloodwork that you already have so that you can finally get some answers as to why you feel the way you do. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

FRIDAYS

Online: Prayer Power Hour – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you, and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

Esoteric Tarot for Beginners – 7-8:30pm.
Drop-in study group with Nick O'Donnell.
Features the bare bones and basics of
tarot symbolism to get you reading the
cards immediately. Every class will explore
the basics of 4 cards per session. \$15 sug-
gested donation. Enlightened Soul Center
& Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-
358-0218. fb.me/e/2MeGXsOVE.

SATURDAYS

**Certified Hypnotherapists Education
and Networking Meeting** – 9:30am-12pm.
1st Sat. Certified Hypnotherapists wel-
come. Includes educational presentation,
workbook and digital material. Clinical
Hypnosis Professional Group, Warren.
Register: 586-899-9009.

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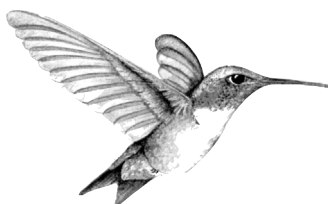


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Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health.

Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr. Sickels.com. See ads, pages 7 and 8.

Holistic Mental Wellness

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE COUNSELING

Karen Kerr, LMSW
2010 Hogback Road, Ste. 6E, Ann Arbor
(734) 660-5610
Karen8Kerr@gmail.com
KarenPKerr.com



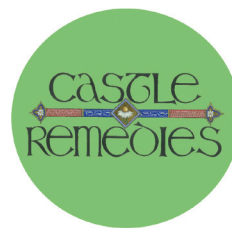
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Serving Michigan for nearly 40 years. Castle Remedies offers over 1,000 homeopathic remedies as well as herbs, essential oils, flower essences, books, unique gifts and jewelry. We carry top-tier nutritional sup-

plement brands such as Metagenics, Ortho Molecular, Xymogen, Integrative Therapeutics, Karuna, NOW, and more. Classes available online. See ad page 14.



Life Coaching

LEAN INTO YOUR LIFE
LeanForwardLife@gmail.com
734-249-9948
LeanIntoYourLife.net



Gary Merel offers the tools needed to create the life you envision. He is an effective catalyst that will help you unravel your life's dilemmas. Gary will help you to ignite your innate wisdom enabling you to see a clear path for your life.

Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

ELEVATE MIND & BODYWORK
Sarah Girard BS, LMT
1140 N. Wagner Rd. Ann Arbor
SarahGirard.Lmt@gmail.com
Elevate.MassageTherapy.com



Take your wellness & spiritual journey to the next level. Sarah combines traditional "medical" Manual Lymphatic Drainage techniques with Reiki healing, breathing guidance, visualization & intuitive listening. All sessions are heart-centered, gentle, and geared towards radical self-love. Request an appointment today.

Mold Testing & Remediation

MOLDPRO
John Du Bois, CMI, CMR
247 W. Main Street, Milan
734-439-8800 • MoldProllc.com



MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

**MICHIGAN FRIENDS CENTER
AT FRIENDS LAKE COMMUNITY**
7748 Clark Lake Road, Chelsea
734-475-1892
MFCenter.org/rent



We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100 pre-COVID-19, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend

rates range from \$200-\$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. See ad page 7.

Relief from Trauma, Anxiety & Depression

ACT ABSOLUTE CHOICES TODAY COUNSELING
NANCY WARNARS, LPC
OperationAbleNancyW@gmail.com
248-845-0513
AbsoluteChoicesTherapy.com



Virtual Teletherapy for all ages. Immediate appointments available. Accepting most insurance. Office in East Lansing. Change happens when you take responsibility to create thinking that supports ways to feel better. Family of origin, groups and media can have a profound effect on your inner being. Letting go of the negativity is critical to co-create new pathways toward hope, peace and love for the life you have a choice to envision.

School/Education

ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE
734-769-7794
NSHAAssociates@gmail.com
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net



Massage therapy training is a one-year program that fulfills the 717-hour, state-licensed professional training with the required 80 hours of clinical internship. The rate for scheduled, Tuesday through Friday appointments at our student massage clinic is \$50/hr. See ad page 19.

Smoking Cessation

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS
Center - A Joyful Journey
734-883-8775



ad page 9.

Stop smoking in one visit. Afraid it's going to be too painful or too difficult? Our unique specialized and proven system makes it easy. Become a happy and permanent non-smoker today. See



Tai Chi & Qigong

PEACEFUL DRAGON SCHOOL
1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor
734-741-0695
PeacefulDragonSchool.com



Tai chi promotes relaxation, is a meditation in motion and is known for increasing balance. Qigong means energy. This class includes Wild Goose Form, stretching, meditation and self-acupressure.

Weight Loss

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS CENTER - A JOYFUL JOURNEY
734-883-8775



Lose weight now with hypnosis. Achieve permanent positive life and habit changes through our safe, rapid and effective system. Tap the potential of your mind to create the health and vitality you've always wanted. See ad page 9.

Wellness Centers

CRYSTERRA WELLNESS
3173 Baker Rd, Dexter
734-649-1849
CrysterraWellness.com



Ancient inspirations for modern well-being. Supporting you and your wellness journey every step of the way with reflexology, reiki, lithography and yoga.

THRIVE! WELLNESS CENTER
148 S. Industrial Dr. Saline
734-470-6766
Thrive-Wellness-Center.com



Wellness Center
Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. See ad page 16.





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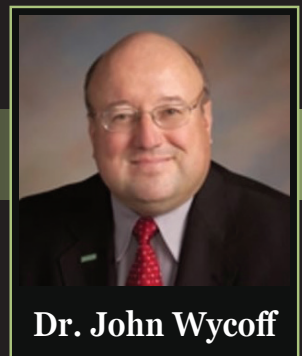
Product *of the* Month

ImmuCore® | 20% OFF *in* FEBRUARY



It is important to improve immunity during the winter months, and ImmuCore, from Wycoff Wellness Center, is on sale for 20 percent off the regular price of \$38 through February 29 in a 90-capsule form.

Triple certified to insure purity and safety, ImmuCore is designed to provide multiple mechanisms to support immune health by enhancing the functions of natural killer cells and T-cell subsets. This unique formulation offers a three-pronged approach to improved immune wellness with key nutrients and mushroom extracts.



Dr. John Wycoff

*"We are comitted to
finding the **CAUSES**
of your symptoms;
not just treating
your symptoms."*